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The Shape of Things

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THE HORROR OF THE UNDECLARED WAR IN the Far East comes close to the centers of power when a British ambassador is nearly killed in a wanton machine-gun attack by Japanese aviators. A protest is inevitable, and the words of outraged authority may unintentionally voice the rights of voiceless millions. After reciting the facts of the attack on the British official car and the wounding of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, the British note to the Japanese government "requests the fullest measure of redress." It then goes on to establish the legal grounds for its protest, asserting "it is one of the oldest and best-established rules of international law that direct or deliberate attacks on noncombatants are absolutely prohibited, whether inside or outside the area in which hostilities are taking place. . . . The foreign, even the diplomatic, status of the occupants [of the car] is also irrelevant. The real issue is that they were non-combatants." And so it is. And so were the thousands of Chinese civilians living in working-class quarters, without arms, outside the area of battle, who are now dead under the rain of Japanese bombs and shells. If the British government's sharp words could check the mass illegality of the Japanese attack they would serve a great purpose. But we have little hope that they will do more than wring from unwilling officials in Tokyo a grudging apology for a single unfortunate incident.

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THE BOMBS DROPPED BY CHINESE AIRPLANES on the American liner President Hoover are in a somewhat different category, though, to be sure, it is no less painful to be hit by an unintended bomb than by one launched in malice. The Chinese have anticipated the State Department's protest, moreover, with a prompt and full apology and an offer of redress. This, of course, does not dispose of the matter except diplomatically. But the incident is not to be confused with the "direct and deliberate attacks" on civilians discussed in the British note. If it proves anything, it is the extreme unwisdom of allowing foreign passenger liners to go into waters infested with fighting ships and planes. The decision of the American government henceforth to evacuate refugees in naval vessels should prevent future similar accidents. And meanwhile it is to be hoped that the Chinese aviators will have learned to distinguish the funnel marks of American passenger liners.

NO PEACE PACTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE President with his reactionary foes, not even in the speeches of Jim Farley, which once more breathe fire. Every sign points to an unflinching firmness of policy on Mr. Roosevelt's part. His recent utterances have been notable for two things. One is that they bring out more and more openly the alliance between big finance and the corporation lawyers. The second is that they stand squarely for the principle of majority rule as against minorities in and out of the government who are trying to obstruct the processes of social change. They show, moreover, a complete confidence in the final verdict that the majority will return when it has a chance. We have little doubt that Mr. Roosevelt is justified in his confidence so far as the issue lies between the New Deal and its enemies. Even on the question of court reform we believe that the people would approve the message that accompanied the President's signature to the act revising the procedure of the lower federal courts—if the inadequacies of the act as judicial reform could really be brought home to them. To explain that issue and the other major issues of the wage-hour bill, the crop-control program, and the power-resources program should be the President's task when he makes his trip to the Pacific Coast. We take it that this trip is now definitely planned, since the Boettigers' own *Post-Intelligencer* has announced that the President will visit Seattle. But a swing around the country should be only a preface to a special session of Congress in which the above measures, along with an anti-lynching bill and a revision of the neutrality laws, must be discussed. We suspect that the members of Congress will return to Washington feeling a bit chastened by contact with their constituents.

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MUNICIPAL POLITICS IS NOT THE SIMPLE thing it used to be. Once a mayoralty campaign was a question of which candidate had the strongest machine or which gave the greatest promise of decent local government. But the present race to capture New York's City Hall shows the antiquated nature of such a notion. What started as a choice between an honest and progressive local administration under LaGuardia and a revival of Tammany corruption is now a whirlpool of national issues, international doctrines, and worldwide prejudices. LaGuardia would like nothing better than a straightforward knock-down battle with Tammany; Jim Farley's candidate, Jeremiah T. Mahoney, is bent on forcing another test of the national New Deal; and the presence of Senator Copeland has succeeded in making the fight another skirmish in the far-flung war between fascists and Communists. The New York Nazis have official instructions to vote for Copeland, and local Communists have equally explicit orders to vote for LaGuardia. On the whole, we agree with LaGuardia in viewing the issue primarily as one of good government, but we can readily see how this issue mirrors the broader movements of the world at large. For good local government today inevitably implies the willingness and the intelligence to deal sympathetically with labor. This is of the utmost im-

portance, since a reactionary city regime could use its police force to smash picket lines, break up opposition party meetings, and in general bring physical destruction to any radical or militant trade-union movement. The lines drawn in New York, in short, are the same as the lines drawn in every other city of the United States and, for that matter, throughout the world.

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EVERY FALL THE NAZIS HOLD A PARTY congress at Nürnberg. It is the biggest show of the year in Germany, and Nazi spellbinders annually outdo each other in tirades against democracy, contempt for religious freedom, and rampant incitement to further persecution of the Jews—all against a background of military pageantry and racial mysticism. Now all this should be strictly the business of the Nazis, and it would be if the German government had the slightest sense of propriety. But it hasn't, and every September it invites the diplomatic corps at Berlin to come to Nürnberg and hear their countries and their beliefs lampooned and denounced. So far the ambassadors of the United States, Great Britain, and France have sensibly found it inconvenient to be present to receive the insults of the Nazis in person. But Sir Neville Henderson, Britain's recently appointed ambassador to Berlin, finds this state of things embarrassing. Consequently he has, with the true British gift for compromise, worked out a formula. Instead of receiving official government invitations, the envoys of the three great democracies, through Sir Neville's intervention, will henceforth be asked to hear the new Meister-singers of Nürnberg as personal guests of the Führer. This craven and wholly unnecessary concession to Nazi arrogance has the sanction of the American State Department, and Prentiss Gilbert, our chargé d'affaires at Berlin, has been instructed to attend. Secretary Hull should be told bluntly by as many organizations and individuals as possible that the United States has official relations with the German government, not with the Nazi party. Our envoys have no business lending the indorsement of American citizens to the annual Nürnberg hysteria.

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DESPITE THE LOSS OF SANTANDER AND THE immediate threat to Asturias, the Spanish government made progress during the past week on the military front. The offensive at Saragossa overshadows in importance any drive yet made by the Loyalists. Capture of Saragossa, which is now by no means impossible, would not only give the government control of one of the most important industrial cities of the country but probably lead to the elimination of the Teruel salient and the reopening of a direct line of communication between Barcelona and Madrid. The drive is the first important offensive on the Aragon front since the beginning of the war, and indicates that the problem of cooperation between the Valencia government and the Anarchist militia from Barcelona has at least been partially solved. On the international front the foolish pretense of non-intervention moved on to crude farce. All Italy celebrated the capture

of Santander by the legions of Il Duce, while the head of the non-intervention fleet solemnly announced that in nearly six months of operation "no European neutral's vessels had been detected carrying arms to Spain." The one diplomatic gleam of hope lay in Britain's strong protest against the bombing of its ships by rebel pirates.

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NEWSPAPER READERS WERE STARTLED LAST week by headlines announcing an impending strike of the Railway Brotherhoods. The swiftness and efficiency with which mediation got under way attest the excellence of the machinery of the National Railway Mediation Board. Though the act that created the board fortunately does not demand compulsory mediation, it has become customary in the railway industry for the carriers to maintain the status quo while mediation efforts are being made. For all practical purposes a sixty-day interval elapses between the breaking out of strike trouble and an actual walkout. In the present case the task of the board is unusually difficult. Eighteen of the brotherhoods have already won an agreement providing for a straight five-cent-an-hour increase in wages, but negotiations between the five remaining brotherhoods and the carriers have broken down. These brotherhoods, which represent the operating crews, are holding out for a percentage increase in wages. The interesting thing about this development is the increasing difference it reveals within the ranks of the traditional "aristocrats" of labor. The brotherhoods which have accepted straight wage increases have acted to bridge the gap in the wage differentials between skilled and unskilled workers. The brotherhoods seeking percentage increases still cling to their aristocracy.

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IN THE HEAVEN OF SALES PROMOTION THE sign on the portals should read "Old Gold." The recent picture-puzzle "contest" must have fulfilled the most fantastic dreams of advertising and publicity men. The P. Lorillard Company, whose Old Gold cigarettes were lagging behind the other standard brands in sales last year, hit on the idea of setting people to solving picture puzzles, and offered \$200,000 in the form of prizes. Five million people responded to what became one of the major national hysterias of our day. You couldn't go to a C. I. O. meeting, a Liberty League rally, a drinking party, or a church picnic, without stumbling over people busily engaged trying to put meaning into ninety pictured inanities. The cream of the jest is that 54,000 got a perfect score. There followed two further elimination contests, with the hysteria increasing. Still 8,100 were left, with perfect scores and seeking new worlds to conquer. Finally the judges awarded the thousand prizes, ranging from \$100,000 to \$10, on the basis of accompanying letters which described the blessings of the contest. Thus what had begun as a challenge to skill, capable of being rated mathematically, ended as a test of literary finesse and hypocrisy. The final winners, we noticed, had a beautiful geographical, sex, and class distribution. Now Old Gold is launch-

ing another "BIGGER AND BETTER CARTOON CONTEST." This time there is no pretense of testing your ingenuity. All you have to do is to praise Old Golds in a twelve-word essay. The reign of literature is unchallenged.

Can Japan Be Stopped?

SIX years ago when Japan invaded Manchuria the proper course of action for the United States and the League powers seemed self-evident. Here was a real test of the peace machinery which the world had so laboriously constructed in the post-war years. If the war system was to be replaced by a system of law, the time had arrived for applying the legal penalties for aggression which had been decided upon. The nations talked of collective action but actually they failed to take even the most elementary protective measures.

Today we are reaping the harvest of the procrastination and timidity of that period. We are faced with a threat vastly more serious than that of 1931. But largely as a result of our earlier failure popular faith in the instruments of collective security has almost reached the vanishing-point. With the breakdown of the peace machinery we are plunged once more into a world in which force is unquestionably law. Public opinion throughout the world is still overwhelmingly for peace, but the peace sentiment is either unchanneled or organized in confused and conflicting groups. In this country particularly the peace movement stands in great danger of being captured by those who in the long run are among the greatest enemies of peace, isolationists who would abandon all effort to create an international law and who think only of the immediate—not the ultimate—safety of the United States.

Under the circumstances it is extraordinarily difficult to propose a positive policy for the United States government. To invoke the Neutrality Act would be, as we have said before, of incalculable advantage to Japan and make us partner to the rape of China. Withdrawal of American interests in China would be equivalent to signing those interests over to Japan. As for collective action to check Japan, how can it be invoked or applied? What type of collective measures can we expect Great Britain, France, and the United States to adopt in the present crisis?

It cannot be denied that the Japanese invasion of China and the threatened blockade of Chinese ports offer a direct threat to the economic interests of all the Western powers. The forces which called into being the Nine-Power Pact are just as strong today as on the day it was signed. And the ironic fact remains that the conflict in imperialistic interests has saved China from extinction several times in the past. If it can do so again, there is every reason to invoke the Nine-Power treaty, to summon the signatories of that pact in a new conference to consider joint policy in the Pacific. The United States is obviously the only country in a position to take the initiative in this direction.

What could such a conference do? We can assume that no nation, either individually or in concert with others, would wish to wage war against Japan in defense of China's territorial integrity or of the powers' imperialistic

interests. Nor is it likely that any nation would approve another experiment in economic sanctions. A boycott of Japan will have to be left to individuals and labor organizations. But there is a real possibility that if the powers were brought together they would agree in insisting on the treaty rights to trade with China, both now, when no war has been declared, and in the event of a Japanese victory. Such a decision could be enforced collectively without danger of provoking an international war. It would be possible for the powers to go even farther. Granted that they are anxious to safeguard their stake in China, they have every reason for desiring to support Nanking as against Japan. Sanctions are out of the question, primarily because of the opposition of vested interests. But no such opposition would develop to an agreement for collective economic assistance to China which would be just as effective as the refusal of aid to Japan. The recent loans arranged by H. H. Kung are a step in this direction. Such assistance would have the advantage of influencing Japan without provoking a fanatical reaction such as might be expected from the application of sanctions. Any action of this sort, to be effective, should include the Soviet Union in addition to the signatories of the Nine-Power treaty. Russia's action in signing a non-aggression pact with China just at this moment was a useful move. If all the democratic powers would undertake similar action, along with concrete economic assistance, there would be real possibility that Japan's illegal aspirations on the continent of Asia might be checked without general war.

U.A.W. Makes History

THE most startling fact about the United Automobile Workers of America is that in a single year it has developed from an untried union of 30,000 into a seasoned fighting organization of 400,000 members and in the process piled up some 400 contracts. The great sitdown strike and the victories won in the hitherto wide-open-shop spaces of the automobile industry are matters of burning pride as well as economic satisfaction to thousands of workers who had never before joined forces with their fellows or dared even to complain to the boss about the speed-up. No wonder the union's convention in Milwaukee turned at intervals into a vast celebration of past gains and in one of its most exuberant demonstrations voted unanimously to raise a special war chest of \$400,000 for the campaign to organize the industry's last hold-out, the Ford empire. The sense of power runs high along the automobile belt. At the same time the convention served to bring into high relief the achievements of the Committee of Industrial Organization and its impact upon every phase of our political and industrial life.

The United Automobile Workers' union is one of the C. I. O.'s lustiest proteges. For that reason it is not surprising that the internal disputes which were aired at the convention should have provided the principal "news angle" for the nation's press as well as for the nation's employers. To the great disappointment of both,

the convention did not split. Instead, its two main factions achieved a genuine compromise, with the help of John L. Lewis and other C. I. O. leaders, and the terms of the compromise seem to guarantee that while the inner struggle will probably continue, it will not hamper the effectiveness of the union in its main drive toward complete organization of the automobile industry.

The struggle for power was waged on the issue of centralization of authority. The "progressive" group, headed by Homer Martin, demanded a greater concentration of authority in the hands of the president in the interest of union discipline, citing as its principal argument the need for preventing the wildcat sitdowns which have served to weaken the union's case with employers. The "unity" group favored more rather than less local autonomy and opposed the move for concentrating authority in the president's office. A struggle for power is never pretty; neither side is ever so pure in its motives and each drives the other into extreme positions, while personalities inevitably play a large part and tend to obscure the real issues.

In the case of the U. A. W. the net results of the fight and of the compromise appear to be good. Given the structure of the automobile industry and of industrial unionism, the union must obviously have a strong central authority and leadership; but this authority must not be achieved at the price of democracy or free expression, and a lively opposition, in so far as it truly represents divergent rank-and-file opinion, is the best guard against abuses of power. At Milwaukee the Martin leadership was upheld—with the undoubted approval of the membership. In the light of the past year's record this was inevitable and desirable. His powers were in some measure increased; at the same time the opposition maintained its representation on the executive board and will continue to have a voice in union councils, where it is in a position to challenge any abuse of presidential authority.

Smooth-Boy Mellon

ANDREW MELLON'S name never had the symbolic value in the minds of Americans that the name of John D. Rockefeller had. It was partly that his huge banking and industrial interests radiated out of Pittsburgh rather than New York; partly that, for a man of his immense power, he worked quietly and kept in the background. He never became, as did Rockefeller or Morgan, the symbol for ruthless business methods or the immense power of finance capital. And yet the curious thing is that his life and fortune embodied the essence of both.

The Mellon empire was as large and far-flung as any. The Mellon fortune, at a moderate estimate, was two billion. The corporate assets that the Mellons controlled in their ventures ran well over ten billion. The Mellon interests were scattered through oil, aluminum, coal, railroads, coke, gas, construction, steel, lumber, real estate, and banking. At a thousand different points in the daily life of the common man Mellon levied tribute upon him for the necessities of living, merely because—like the

earlier robber barons—Mellon had seized and occupied the strategic points in the flow of commodities. Whole communities flourished or withered as the Mellon banks extended or withdrew their support.

All this was done with an almost feline quietness. For Mellon was one of the smooth boys of industry and finance. He was low-voiced, smooth, fastidious. He collected old paintings and seemed to belong with them. The fact is that as capitalism advances, it sloughs off its primitives and effects its purposes through more polished and more subtle specimens.

Mellon was one of these. It was his good genius that led him to turn from business to politics in Harding's era of normalcy. In their drastic reaction to the synthetic nobility of a crusading war, the people were even willing to accept one of the two or three richest and most powerful men in America as Secretary of the Treasury. Once in the limelight Mellon basked in it. The myth grew up that he was a financial statesman, and the man who had been given the Cabinet post because he was a "fat cat" for the Republican campaign chest was hailed as "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton."

We can now use Mellon to measure the distance we have traveled in our political life since then. For the atmosphere in which such a man as Secretary of the Treasury could brazenly prepare a measure repealing the excess-profits tax, drastically reducing the surplus tax, and loading the common people with an increased burden of indirect taxes was the same atmosphere in which a cheap and crooked lawyer could be chosen as Attorney General and run the affairs of the nation through a gang. Daugherty and Mellon did not like each other, and there was a gulf between them in their personalities. But for our society as a whole their basic difference was only one of scale. One represented the corrupt racketeering of petty trade and the parasite professions; the other represented the formally honest racketeering of big business, ready to use his political office to intrench its power.

Mellon is dead, but his fortune lives on. His 100 per cent monopoly aluminum trust also lives on. The best tribute we could pay his memory would be not only to proceed vigorously by court action to break the Mellon hold on aluminum, but to proceed just as vigorously to change the economic set-up under which such a career is possible.

Scuttling the WPA

FROM mid-June to mid-August approximately 335,000 persons were removed from the rolls of the WPA in order to keep within the \$1,500,000,000 appropriation for the current fiscal year. In all, WPA rolls have been reduced by approximately \$1,500,000 persons in the past eighteen months. What has happened to these people? Have they, as Mr. Hopkins suggests, been mainly absorbed in industry? Have they been turned over to local relief and private charity? Or have they simply been allowed to shift for themselves? The

answer is, of course, unknown as far as large numbers are concerned. But fairly complete information is available regarding the latest discharges in some of the larger cities.

In New York 23,684 of the 25,000 WPA workers who were dismissed between June 30 and August 10 applied for home relief. More than three-fifths of these—14,623—were immediately placed on the relief rolls, while 3,959 applications were rejected. The cases of the remaining 5,102 were still in the process of investigation at the last report. In Illinois the state relief commission reports an increase in the relief load between June and August of 12,213 cases, whereas the normal seasonal trend called for a decline of 7,000 to 14,000 cases. This would seem to account for the greater part of the 30,000 taken from the state WPA rolls during this period. In Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, according to the United States Conference of Mayors, 75 per cent of the laid-off workers had applied for home relief. In Toledo the proportion was 62 per cent and in Indianapolis 60 per cent.

From the standpoint of the WPA employee, the shift to home relief may not always be undesirable. In the larger cities relief grants for big families often exceed WPA wages. But except in a comparatively few states local relief standards are notoriously low, and it may be assumed that an overwhelming majority of the discharged men have suffered a serious lowering of living standards. The fact that the proportion obtaining relief in the less populous centers is not so great as in the cities is probably due not so much to the greater opportunities for employment in the smaller towns as to their less adequate relief appropriations.

The scuttling of the WPA is the less understandable in view of the reports issued recently showing the magnificent work which it achieved during its heyday. It is impossible here even to list the work done in New York City in improving parks and playgrounds, demolishing old-law tenements, extending public libraries, expanding vocational-education programs, and establishing mosquito control and other sanitation projects. The work of the arts projects stands as one of the most brilliant achievements in the field of popular education in the history of the United States. Can there be any logic or sense in abolishing the jobs of men engaged in useful undertakings and supporting them in idleness?

Responsibility for this deplorable situation rests largely with the President. When a group of "job marchers" demanded last week that dropped workers who have been unable to obtain work in private industry be reinstated in the WPA, the President replied that it was not within his power to comply with the request. It was the President, however, who set the figure for relief requirements at \$1,500,000,000, over the protests of the liberals in Congress. And even now he can, as he has done before, use up the money at his disposal and go to Congress with a request for more. There is no reason why hundreds of thousands of former WPA employees, to say nothing of the country at large, should be forced to suffer for the Administration's bad mathematics.

A Third Party for 1940?

BY MAX LERNER

Washington, August 29

DON'T be deceived into thinking that a third party is just around the corner. Like third-term talk, third-party talk is about one-quarter based on probabilities, one-quarter irresistible speculation, and the remaining half propaganda.

What has given some plausibility to the talk is the fact—and it is a fact—that there is a widening rift between the President and Lewis. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Lewis don't happen to hit it off. They are too much alike in personality, and too divergent in background and experience. Each expects to dominate his world, but each brings different premises and purposes to support his mastery. But do not make the mistake of giving too great an emphasis to this personal incompatibility. Both men are adept at using their friendships and hatreds instrumentally. Remember that Mr. Lewis's ablest lieutenants today are the men who once fought him bitterly, and that Mr. Roosevelt is fighting today the men from whose select ranks he came.

The question of whether there will be a third party in 1940 depends mainly on Roosevelt's fate in the Democratic split and the success of the C. I. O. in its struggle on two fronts—with big business and the A. F. of L. If Roosevelt salvages the major part of his forces and loses only the tory diehards, the Democrats will be able to push forward with a third New Deal, and the talk of another party will become for the time being academic. If, on the other hand, Roosevelt is badly beaten in his own struggle and (conceivably) joins his fortunes with progressive labor, the new party will be bound to face a conservative Democratic-Republican coalition, and we shall have the same two-party system under different labels. If the internal Democratic fight results in more or less of a draw, labor will face the choice of swarming into the Democratic Party and renewing the struggle, or launching a party of its own.

For the C. I. O. leaders are primarily realists. They are hard-headed, pragmatic men, brought up not in the academies but the trade unions, rarely given to wishful thinking. They are not men who will play the gull to anyone. They are bold men and tenacious of their purpose. But they are also supple and flexible men, who will not continue to pursue a purpose unless there is a chance of its yielding to them. Take them one by one—Lewis, Hillman, Dubinsky, Murray, Brophy, Oliver, Pressman—and you will find them men of very diverse personalities. But there is one thing on which they are all agreed, and that is that political action can go no faster or farther than economic action. They understand that every successful party in American history has followed the lines of economic power. And being primarily trade unionists, they aim to use political power not as an end

in itself but as a means first for strengthening trade unionism and the submerged economic groups and eventually for building a social system whose outlines are still a bit fuzzy in their minds.

I set all this down not in praise or dispraise but merely because it is relevant to third-party talk. All that there is of a third party today is Labor's Non-Partisan League, and that is built squarely on the economic strength of labor. The C. I. O. leaders are proud of the league. Born in the last election, it has grown to be a lusty and likable youngster. That half of its forty-eight state organizations exist chiefly on paper should be credited to George L. Berry, head of the Pressmen's Union, who was made president of the league on its formation largely to keep the A. F. of L. in line. The sort of man he is may best be seen by his record in the NRA, where he made a lot of noise and accomplished nothing, and his recent record in the Senate, where he has accomplished exactly the same amount without opening his mouth once to answer the attacks on labor. As long as Berry was head of the league, it remained a paper construct. Now that he has been forced out, E. L. Oliver is acting head as executive vice-president. Oliver has energized many of the state chairmen and committees into building a mass membership and lobbying effectively for state and national legislation. The model state leagues are New York, where the American Labor Party is the state branch of the league, and Pennsylvania, where the league has helped push through a tolerably good legislative program. New England, where the C. I. O. has not been very successful, is quiet, although there are stirrings in Connecticut. Michigan and Ohio, on the other hand, since they are centers of successful drives in automobiles and steel, have active leagues. The main points of concentration this summer for organizing active state leagues will be in Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Wisconsin.

This year will find a large number of league candidates in the various active states running for mayor, city councilman, sheriff, police judge, justice of the peace. None of these offices are the Presidency, but they are of enormous importance in labor's struggle to organize. It was the experience of strikers with the petty local officials that led to labor's participation in the election at Akron, Ohio. From Akron the Ohio movement caught fire and spread to Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Massillon. The league is taking part in the mayoralty fights in Pittsburgh and Detroit. In New York City Mayor LaGuardia is running on a Labor Party ticket.

And so the list goes. The items are minor but indicative. They are only beginnings, and the big problems still have to be faced. Can labor rely on progressives in the regular parties, or should it make sure by running separate candidates? The tendency now is to use an

independent ticket only as a last resort. Can the league survive as the split within labor widens? This is a very serious matter, considering the fact that of forty-eight state chairmen, some twenty-eight are still in the A. F. of L., and the state committees are even more heavily weighted in that direction.

But on the two major obstacles that a labor party must somehow hurdle I have not yet touched. One is the problem of wooing the middle class. The other is the problem of getting, or at least neutralizing, the farm vote. The C. I. O. leaders are perfectly aware of the problem of the middle class, economically in a no man's land, ridden with fears, an easy prey to big-business propaganda. But the tendency of some is to drive ahead with labor organization, depending on the middle class to follow in the wake of a strong labor movement. The tendency of others is to be more cautious of middle-class and regional sensibilities. In the textile organization drive, for example, there are 112 organizers in the Southern area. Of these not one is a Communist, not one is a Jew, and a hundred are native Southerners. My guess is that the latter trend is growing.

The place of the farmers in a labor party is, outwardly at least, a paradox. Any labor party would have to plan to win the vast food-producing area that the farmers represent and its electoral votes. Lewis himself has lived and done organizing work in Iowa, Illinois, Ohio. He knows the farmer's mentality and knows how important it is for labor to reach it. Yet very little has been done in that direction. There are some here who feel that the

C. I. O. made a grave mistake by moving last month into the organization of farm laborers without attempting at the same time the organization of farmers. A farm conference was held recently at Ames, Iowa. It was presided over by one of the editors of the powerful *Des Moines Register-Tribune*. It was attended by county agents, members of the reactionary Farm Bureau, local business men, members of the National Manufacturers' Association. In itself the meeting amounted to little, but it is a harbinger of what groups may be led to common action when the farmers grow thoroughly frightened at the inroads of organizers among farm labor. It represents a sort of Johnstown formula for the rural areas.

This need not be, of course, the direction for American farmers. There are forces among them which, if intelligently used, could put the large majority of working farmers on the progressive side and bring them eventually into a labor coalition. Even Henry Wallace, who leans heavily on the Farmers' Union, is aware of these potentialities. There is reason to believe that Wallace, with his eye on 1940, is steering his course according to his estimate of how successfully the farmers can be reorganized along progressive lines. Any labor party that leaves that possibility out of account will find itself islanded in the big cities and the industrial areas. Labor will increasingly in the next three years turn to militant political action. But that action will take the form of a third party only if labor is ready in terms of economic power, and only as a last resort in carrying out its policy of rewarding labor's friends and punishing its enemies.

Madrid's Foreign Defenders

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Valencia, August 15

A SPANISH government representative who attended King George VI's coronation outlined to Foreign Minister Eden Valencia's plan for ending the civil war. A truce was to be declared. All foreign troops and volunteers serving on both sides would then be immediately withdrawn from Spain. During the truce no battle lines would be shifted. Non-Spaniards having been eliminated, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union were to devise a scheme, which the Spanish government pledged itself in advance to accept, whereby the will of the Spanish nation regarding its political and social future might be authoritatively ascertained.

Since the departure of outsiders is the only key to an early peace in Spain, the official data on the government's International Brigade are of interest. Volunteers from abroad commenced trickling into government territory in September, 1936. From that time to this, 23,000 of them, in round figures, have joined the Loyalist ranks. They first fought at the front in November and have

since been continuously involved in the hottest combats of the war. The names of 2,500 dead and missing are known, but the authorities believe that the total number of casualties is nearer 4,000. In addition, from 12,000 to 15,000 men have been disabled by wounds or illness at the front. At present 2,000 are lying in hospitals. A further 1,000 are unfit for duty in the trenches, 4,800 have been repatriated on account of sickness or incapacitation or as political undesirables, and 2,500 are still in training or engaged in permanent staff work.

In July, 1937, approximately 7,600 foreign volunteers were stationed at the various Loyalist fronts. They served in brigades whose composition was no longer overwhelmingly foreign. At first the government's international force consisted of foreigners only. It was soon discovered that the discipline and morale of the Spanish troops benefited greatly by contact with the foreigners, and late last year the international column was reorganized so that each brigade included three battalions of foreigners to two of Spaniards. This policy of mixing has now been carried a step farther: foreigners and Spaniards fight to-

gether in the same companies and battalions. In no army unit do the foreigners any longer constitute a majority; often they are merely a small kernel. One division, for instance, embraces 1,200 foreigners and 4,000 Spaniards, and in the Eighty-sixth Brigade there are 280 foreigners as against 2,200 Spaniards.

The government's 23,000 foreign volunteers entered Spain over a period of ten months, and usually only a few weeks elapsed between their arrival in Spain and their appearance at the front. The first International Brigade reached the Madrid front in the beginning of November 1,900 strong; the second, in the same month, 1,550 strong. Four weeks later their total strength was 1,800. It is safe to say, therefore, that the number of foreigners in the Loyalist army never exceeded 15,000 on any given day. Of these, no more than 8,000 or 9,000 were ever at the front at the same time.

The Loyalist foreign volunteers played their biggest role in November, 1936, when they saved Madrid. Their services to the government cause were considerable for several months thereafter. Since the spring of 1937, however, the discipline and equipment of the Spanish army have so improved, and its size has increased so rapidly that the significance of the foreign volunteers has been much reduced. They are still used as stiffening, however, and their officers are a valuable asset. The International Brigade is a daily reminder of the importance of events in Spain to the cause of democracy and the struggle against world fascism. The presence of the volunteers tells the Spaniards that the Loyalists are fighting not merely to repel a foreign fascist invasion and to rid Spain of her feudal backwardness; they are fighting to destroy a blight which threatens other countries as well, and which, if it overran Spain, would endanger world peace.

The Spaniards profoundly appreciate the lofty idealism that moves each foreign volunteer to leave his peaceful home and precipitate himself into a situation which he knows has already resulted in the death or crippling of a large proportion of his comrades. There could have been no compulsion except an inner one and there will be no reward except an immaterial one. That the volunteers almost invariably had to steal out of their own countries over the obstructions erected by their governments, and that they would, to boot, face difficulties in returning, added to the nobility of their act. The unselfishness of the foreigners and the gratitude of the Spaniards have cemented a brotherhood which is firm and inspiring. For many, a truce requiring them to leave Spain would be tragic. They have so identified themselves with the nation for which they are ready to give their lives that they want to stay and work in it. Several hundred of the International Brigade have married Spanish women, and a large number of others have signified their wish to acquire Spanish citizenship. The relationship between the foreigners and Spaniards is excellent. In recent weeks the Americans in the training camp at Tarazona de la Mancha have helped the peasants to gather in their crops, and foreign soldiers in reserve positions near the fronts have likewise lent a hand.

Men so dedicated to a noble cause can only feel dis-

gust and heartache when they think of the official hostility manifested toward them in their homelands. An American at Tarazona said to me, "Will we have to creep back into the United States like criminals?" I should have liked to reply, "No, you will be received like heroes," for these volunteers deserve no less. There can be no doubt that they are behaving much more in the tradition of America than the bureaucrats who tried to prevent their enlistment.

In the last three months Frenchmen, who formerly constituted the bulk of the International Brigade, have ceased to come altogether. The vast majority of fresh recruits hail from the United States and Latin America. The other day I traveled 275 kilometers in a bouncing baby Fiat car from Valencia to Tarazona, where a battalion of North Americans is undergoing training. There, in the center of the dry Castilian plateau, the accents of Mississippi, the Bronx, New England, Philadelphia, Chicago, and West Coast wharfs mingled with the Spanish of the folks round about, who had learned to love the newcomers. Robert Merriman, once a lecturer in the University of California, was in command. "A year ago this afternoon," I thought, "I played tennis with Merriman on the Petrovka." He left Moscow in December and by virtue of his R. O. T. C. experience soon became chief officer of the first Lincoln battalion. On February 27, during the famous and decisive Jarama battle for the Valencia road, when the fate of Madrid hung in the balance, he led a charge against the enemy lines which encountered the withering fire of fascist machine-guns. Merriman fell with a bullet hole through his right arm. Marion, his wife, got the news the next day and rushed by plane from Moscow to Valencia. She found her husband in a base hospital, his arm in a plaster-of-paris cast. On that arm now glow the three red stripes of a Spanish army captain, and Merriman is preparing to take a new American battalion up to the front.

Merriman belongs to no political party. The majority of the battalion are Communists, but a few belong to the Socialist Party and some are non-partisan. Brian of Germantown said to me, "My father was a Democrat and my mother a Republican who would listen to nothing else. I have no political affiliations. I came to do my duty as a good American." Sam Romer, a Socialist, has been elected by the men of his section as political commissar, and Joe Lash, another Socialist, is a much-liked figure. Inter-party squabbles disappear in the proximity of fascist bombs and bullets.

I found part of the battalion at the rifle range. Many of the men had handled weapons before, and they hit the target frequently. Such volunteers, I was told, were preferred, but it was the consensus that a month's training sufficed to convert even the greenest recruit into a fine soldier. This applied especially to mechanically minded Americans.

The men were firing from rifles and one light machine-gun. I asked what kind of machine-gun it was. The reply was "Mexican," but the characters on the gun were Russian. "Mexican" is a formula, and the word is never pronounced without a wink. I prefer my facts straight.

A section of the battalion was learning signaling in the pine woods outside the village. Another practiced digging trenches. After the evening meal Merriman rushed away to lead a class in map-making and map-reading, some men went to study Spanish, a third group spent an evening hour listening to a lecture on Spanish history, and in the barracks the volunteers gathered in circles to discuss the civil war and its implications and events at home.

Their questions put me to shame. They asked about conditions in America, especially about the C. I. O. and the strikes. When I gave them some news they told me what had happened subsequently, and soon I was a grateful listener. They wanted additional magazines and newspapers. Pressed for more material demands, they admitted that they lacked soap, sun glasses, pocket flashlights, and coffee. American cigarettes were finally reaching them in sufficient quantities.

The Americans at Tarazona lived in large private homes which had been adapted to their needs. They felt very comfortable and what they missed they introduced themselves. Thus the barracks of one company had a home-made shower bath, and I saw some amateur bricklayers making windows in the thick Spanish walls so that foreign fresh-air fiends might be satisfied. Windows and doors were closed with gauze to keep out flies, and fly-paper lay about in too many places. Each man had his

own bed. Cleanliness of rooms and person was the Americans' first law. Their health, in a new climate and under new conditions, was excellent. Life in a good summer camp could hardly be as pleasant. And here, in addition, the men enjoy the tremendous exhilaration of self-sacrifice. The consciousness that they are serving a great purpose creates a unique atmosphere. To be sure, some volunteers get drunk and some are problems. This is no assembly of angels. Yet their politics have molded their character. A caustic Englishman who signed himself W. C. C. wrote a Critique of My American Comrades in *Pasaremos*, the wall newspaper of the George Washington battalion. He said: "They have absolutely no class or racial prejudices. The Negro is as much loved or detested by his comrades, according to mood, as the purest of whites. Politically, I find my American comrades very advanced. At times, I think, inclined to talk at too great a length without very much to show in concrete results. Childishly fatuous, some of them. Occasionally they ignore realities or appear to do so. But though a group may have their heads in the clouds, usually there is one American who brings them back to earth. . . . Great lovers of meetings . . . immeasurably fond of 'points of order'. . . of a high intellectual order . . . quick to resent cruelty in any shape or form . . . they possess many faults, most of which spring from an inherent crudeness or virility." Not bad.

The New Deal in Mexico

BY L. O. PRENDERGAST

Mexico City, August 25

FOR nearly three years the Cárdenas government has been making a great stir, not only in Mexico but in the world at large. A long series of dramatic measures and bold decisions has kept the social and economic pots almost constantly at the boiling point, in a ferment paralleling, in Mexican terms, the experience of Roosevelt's New Deal. The government has nationalized the railroads. It has adopted an expropriation law which gives it unlimited powers over private property in the interest of the public good. It has distributed the lands of the Laguna cotton kings and is about to do the same with the henequen plantations of the Yucatan peninsula. It has greatly encouraged labor and helped it in its struggle with the foreign oil, mining, and light-and-power companies. It has, in short, been admirably progressive, basing itself on the widest popular support and honestly laboring to secure some measure of social justice for Mexico's submerged nintenths.

Despite the progress that has been made, recent developments here reveal several conspicuous flies in the ointment. On August 1 some 50,000 organized workers marched through the streets of Mexico City in a grim pro-

test against the high cost of living. Real wages are far below the level of three years ago, and the capitalist class as a whole, which, like its counterpart in the United States, has been desperately fighting the government at every step, is today actually better off than it was under the beneficent tutelage of its departed hero, ex-President Plutarco Elías Calles. It is all very confusing, especially to those who are reluctant to give up their quaint notion that Mexico is a land of socialist construction and who arrive here expecting to find another Moscow.

The truth of the matter is that Mexico has just embarked on the long voyage of capitalist development and is at the moment enjoying its first deceptive capitalist boom. Being primarily a country of raw materials, Mexico has benefited greatly from the revived demand for minerals and oil stimulated by the war scare and the world armaments race. Thirty-five-dollar gold and the silver-purchase policy of the United States have helped the movement along. Depreciation of the currency has done wonders for the export trade: exports have risen more than 75 per cent from their low point in 1932. Domestic production and commerce have likewise enormously increased, as has new capital investment; a building boom has contributed to the steadily augmenting economic

activity in Mexico City and to some extent in the provinces. Bank deposits, credits, surpluses, and profits all stand at new highs. Add to these factors the many public works being carried out by the government, a widespread orgy of speculation, and the influx of tourists who spend money, and you have a bonanza which is piling up unprecedented profits in spite of the crocodile tears of conservatives over the agrarian reforms and the "rapacity" of the labor unions.

All this, however, does not quite account for the really extraordinary rise in prices, particularly of essential foodstuffs, in the past few months, a rise which long ago completely wiped out the wage gains won by the strikes of the last three years. It would be impossible here to analyze fully the basic causes, but chiefly they are to be found in the general crisis of Mexican agriculture, in the primitive and inadequate system of agricultural credit, and in the insufficient means of communication between agricultural and urban centers. These conditions have given a great strategic advantage to the slick speculator who can place himself in the neck of the distributive bottle. There is an astonishing spread between what the small farmer receives for his product and the price the ultimate consumer pays for it in the city market. The rural districts are habitually drained dry by the village money-lenders, *acaparadores*, as they are called, who corner local production through advances on crops, store the produce in warehouses or their own backyards, and wait for a rise. The easy bank credit available to speculators—although at interest rates that would make an American business man's blood run cold—has made Mexico a chiselers' paradise.

From June to July the following price rises were registered in Mexico City: charcoal, used almost universally as a cooking fuel, jumped from 7 to 12 centavos a kilogram; rice, from 24 to 32 centavos the kilo; *frijoles* (beans), from 20 to 36 centavos; sugar, from 29 to 34; pork lard, from 1 peso to 1.60; tomatoes, from 15 to 30 centavos; salt, from 8 to 12; milk, from 22 to 30 centavos the liter; and corn, the principal food of 85 per cent of the population, from 16 to 19 centavos. These quotations are reported by a labor newspaper and in some instances are considerably higher than the official figures for the same period, the discrepancy being due to the fact that they were gathered by workers making daily rounds from store to store. If they lack scientific accuracy, they reveal not only the extreme variations of the upward tendency but also the tactics of the average shopkeeper. The list might be indefinitely extended. Moreover, these recent rises come on top of previous increases of from 25 to 40 per cent during the past six or eight months. Still further increases have occurred in most of the products mentioned since the middle of July.

It is obvious that a wage level which has risen at the most generous estimate some 25 per cent since 1933 is by now hopelessly inadequate, if in fact it was ever really adequate. Official and unofficial investigations into the cost of living in Mexico City during 1934 and 1935 demonstrated that the amount necessary to maintain minimum standards of health and decency was then four

pesos a day. Nevertheless, the legal minimum wage was fixed at two pesos for the Federal District and has remained stationary since then. The law passed a year and a half ago making payment for the seventh day of the week obligatory on all employers would have helped had it not been immediately seized upon as a pretext for additional price increases. The result, of course, has been a steadily deteriorating living standard throughout the country, affecting not only the workers and peasants but the middle class as well, and a discontent and unrest which are assuming alarming proportions. It was not without justification that Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the C. T. M. (Confederation of Mexican Workers), told the capitalist class in Sunday's demonstration that it was playing with fire.

In an effort to deal with the situation the government recently passed a law authorizing "associations of producers for the distribution and sale of their products," which in the hullabaloo raised by the simultaneous announcement of the nationalization of the railroads has gone virtually unnoticed. This law provides for the voluntary organization of all farm producers, under government supervision, into non-profit marketing societies, made up of local, state, and national bodies, which will fix prices, establish production quotas, regulate importation and exportation, and control markets. The ostensible aim is to eliminate middlemen, speculators, and *acaparadores* from the distributive process, assure the producer a fair return on his product by suppressing unfair competition, and protect the consumer by fixing prices in strict accord with observed demand, supply, and production costs.

Does all this stir vague recollections of the NRA codes? Except that government intervention is here more marked, there is sufficient similarity. As in so much of Mexico's revolutionary legislation, however, the high purposes of the new law's brief preamble are none too firmly echoed in the articles themselves, which allow a perilous latitude of interpretation to the functionaries intrusted with their fulfilment. There is nothing to suggest that the powerful monopolies which now have a stranglehold on Mexican agriculture will suffer unduly under the new regulations. On the contrary, it is more likely that like the NRA codes the law will operate to deliver into their hands, nicely trussed up and gagged, the hundreds of thousands of tiny producers who have no political pull, no money for the subornation of official favors, and no resources by which to escape the tentacles of the "voluntary" organization they will be required to join. And to insure their coming in, the law contains an innocent-looking little joker in the form of government subsidies to the projected societies.

It is plain, of course, that this measure can have no immediate effect on the prevailing price structure. Its "regulation"—that is, the supplementary legislation which will contain the precepts for its functioning—is still to be drawn up and published, and the societies it contemplates can hardly be organized in much less than a year. What it is more apt to do is to freeze the price level at a point determined by the largest monopo-

list producers of each crop. The existing chaos, it is true, may be reduced to some kind of order, but it is hard to see how the consumer will benefit.

In spite of laws, agitation, protests, administrative threats, and police measures, prices stubbornly refuse to come down. In fact they will in all probability continue to mount until they are brought crashing down by the only sure method capitalism knows of reducing prices—a major economic crisis, which is painful but effective. Until then labor's only hope of overtaking the elusive full dinner pail would seem to lie in aggressive strike action. The measures proposed to the government by the C. T. M.—rigid control of credit, suppression of speculation, and importation of cereals—can alleviate but are powerless to cure the disease completely.

From all of which an interesting historical deduction may be drawn. Mexican capitalism is growing up and is preparing to celebrate its majority by indulging in the curious luxury of its first autonomous, strictly home-grown economic crisis. The Mexican people may feel that this is a disproportionately high price to pay for a purely theoretical demonstration of national progress, but unfortunately capitalism is like that. The labor movement had better begin to realize that a socialist paradise is never going to be legislated in by a capitalist government, even one that professes socialist ideals and is as generally well-intentioned, progressive, and sympathetic

toward the plight of the working classes as is the Cárdenas administration.

Any discussion of the situation would be incomplete if its political implications were not indicated. Even capitalists are at last becoming aware that crises are inevitable under their system, and it obviously suits their purposes better if leftist governments can be made to bear the onus. Nothing would be so admirably calculated to discredit the policies and actions of the present administration as their culmination in a serious economic disaster. I am not suggesting that Mexico's capitalists are deliberately conspiring to bring about a depression, but there is plenty of evidence to show that part, at least, of the recent precipitous price rise has been artificially provoked with the purpose of inciting popular resentment and discontent, which the middle-class fascist groups are demagogically attempting to exploit.

The only form of popular organization that might check the reactionary offensive would be the long-heralded but still non-existent people's front. In spite of the dangers attendant on the projected inclusion of the National Revolutionary Party, the government's official political machine, in the popular front, there is no question that such a front would enormously improve the position of workers and peasants. And it would represent a decisive barrier to the growing inroads of fascist propaganda and sentiment.

A. F. of L. Versus Seattle Labor

BY COLE STEVENS

LESS spectacular than the struggle in automobiles or steel but almost equally important to labor's future is the life-and-death battle between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. now raging in the Pacific Northwest. Seattle and other Pacific Coast cities seem to be a testing ground for the most vicious attacks yet made by the federation leadership upon progressive unionism and the C. I. O.

Pushed out in front by William Green and the A. F. of L. executive council is Dave Beck, regional vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Beck is an ambitious, rotund little man with an unusual talent for employing strong-arm methods with telling effect. He has built up an empire of about 10,000 teamsters in the region around Seattle alone, where his power is most concentrated. Since the death of Mike Casey of the San Francisco teamsters, Beck's sway has been extended over the entire Pacific Coast. He keeps his boys in line in most places by getting them good wages and by running their meetings with an iron hand. Dissenting motions are ruled out of order, and if the dissenter persists, violent retribution from the "beef squad" follows.

Beck has proved his worth to his masters by turning the Seattle Central Labor Council, a year ago a progres-

sive body, into a rubber stamp for his policies. His unions, and also the building-trades unions and others dominated by him, have their instructions to send their delegates to every council meeting to vote with the leaders—or else. On at least two occasions opposition delegates have been badly beaten up at the Labor Temple by gangsters wearing teamster-union buttons and brass knuckles. The "goon squad," as it is commonly termed, consists of at least twenty picked thugs and ex-convicts who belong to the teamsters' union and are always on hand for such jobs.

The Washington State Federation of Labor is in similar straits. At its July convention this year more than half of the delegates were from teamster or building-trades unions, and they were carefully instructed to attend all meetings and to vote with their floor leaders. They passed resolutions condemning the C. I. O. and calling for a Congressional investigation of the "communism" in its ranks, declared the strike of the American Newspaper Guild against the Seattle *Star* illegal, and called upon "all civic, patriotic, fraternal, business, and community groups" to support their action. And they rejected proposed resolutions that favored affiliation with the Washington Commonwealth Federation, support of

the steel strike, a ban on shipments of war materials to Spain, the calling of a rank-and-file convention of A. F. of L. and C. I. O. members to bring about labor unity, and support for the President's Supreme Court plan.

After a series of losing battles against labor the Seattle Chamber of Commerce recently made an about-face and adopted a peace policy of dealing with the "right people." The chamber is now Beck's closest ally, and he has served it well—particularly by organizing the employers themselves to keep prices up. Through his unions the prices of laundry and dry cleaning, ice, beer, automobile supplies, and even used cars are now uniformly controlled, to the detriment of the consumer. And he has been of inestimable value to the chamber by fighting all militant, democratic unionism, even to the extent of fostering dual unions organized in opposition to the Workers' Alliance and the Newspaper Guild. In this sort of activity Beck is merely reflecting the national trend of the A. F. of L. toward company unionism. He says quite frankly that the primary policy of his union is to organize employers, since that is most effective.

This strange alliance of "labor" leaders and the Chamber of Commerce is also in control of Seattle politics. Mayor John F. Dore was elected in March, 1936, with the united support of all labor. For a year he was all labor's mayor, but for the past few months he has apparently been taking orders from Beck. He is now trying to save himself politically by campaigning for reelection on an "anti-C. I. O." platform designed to rally business and middle-class support. "I am glad the teamsters' union is running Seattle," he said recently. "It has the brains, the money, and the power."

Beck has fought a guerrilla war against progressive unionism for years. He smashed the brewery workers' union and fought the warehousemen by sending his teamsters in to replace them, and he is now making war on the Newspaper Guild. For two years the district circulation managers of the Seattle *Star*, whose job is to supervise the route carriers, tried to get the teamsters to come in and organize them, since they carried bundles of papers in their cars at that time. Instead of organizing the supervisors, the teamsters took over all hauling of papers. Several district managers were laid off, and the nineteen who were left—no longer teamsters by any stretch of the imagination—applied for membership in the Newspaper Guild. Here they found democratic unionism, and their minimum wages, moreover, rose from \$18 to \$35 a week.

Then out of a clear sky, on July 1, the teamsters' union notified the *Star* management that it had been granted jurisdiction over the supervisors' jobs too, and that henceforth only teamsters could fill the nineteen posts. By way of a preliminary threat they refused to haul papers for several hours on the following day. The district managers were called together by the *Star* circulation manager to hear the ultimatum presented by one of Beck's lieutenants. But they were not impressed. All nineteen voted to stay in the Guild. The next day they were told that nineteen teamsters were being put into

their jobs, and that they could expect two weeks' pay from that date.

The Guild immediately took a strike vote, and sixty-five out of eighty office employees walked out. Charges were filed with the National Labor Relations Board, which issued a complaint against the *Star*, and for four days the plant was closed down. The teamsters were ready to go through the picket line to haul papers, but the typographical union, for a while at least, refused to follow suit.

Following events, as brought out in the Labor Board hearing, showed clearly the alignment of forces against the Guild. A meeting was called which was attended by several of the *Star* management, Beck and two other A. F. of L. officials, and E. B. Fish, labor-relations expert of the Chamber of Commerce. This strange group adjourned to the office of Mayor Dore, who shortly afterward issued a statement to the press offering to have his police break up the Guild picket line, stop the distribution of literature, and rope off the street whenever the management should request. With this promise of official interference in its behalf, the paper started up with a skeleton crew. The management repudiated two plans for settlement drawn up by its own attorneys and tentatively approved by the Guild. It demanded that the A. F. of L. and not the Labor Relations Board be given the right to decide the question of jurisdiction in spite of the fact that the Guild was already in the C. I. O. Now the *Star* is refusing to take the guildsmen back except as individuals; the union is locked out.

Mayor Dore is staking everything on Beck. He told a committee of progressive unionists on August 14, "We'll be generous and let you keep a couple of pickets outside the *Star* plant. The *Star* doesn't mind them. . . . But if you try to mass-picket the *Star*, there'll be trouble and the police will disperse you. Anyone who resists will go to jail. Anyone who resists too much will go to the hospital or to the morgue." He has made good his threat with repeated wholesale arrests of peaceful pickets.

Beck's tactics have alienated many important unions, and the revolt is growing. The Federation of Woodworkers, 120,000 strong, voted at its July convention to join the C. I. O. as a full-fledged industrial union. The Pacific Coast longshoremen, except for one local in Tacoma, have also joined the C. I. O., and other maritime unions are expected to follow as soon as the rank and file have a chance to express their preference. In a number of cities powerful C. I. O. labor councils have been formed, and in Seattle a progressive "labor unity council" of both C. I. O. and A. F. of L. unions has been set up to fight for unity and democracy in the labor movement.

Given time, labor will clean its own house. The progressive unions are launching a widespread campaign of publicity to explain what "Beckism" means to labor and to the public, and to remove the stigma which newspaper propaganda has attached to the C. I. O. In the end Beck and other lieutenants of the employers will be defeated, and only then will the American labor movement attain its full strength and dignity.

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

SOMEONE once asked Rudyard Kipling: "What do you find to do in the country?" "Everything," he replied, "except the time to do it." This is now my stock reply to those who say to me at my farm: "How wonderful to work here! No interruptions, few telephone calls, rare visitors, unbroken hours for literary labors. No wonder you prefer this to the city." On its face the statement appears valid and correct. It is neither. It's a delusion, for all nature here is in a conspiracy to keep me from working. True, there are few telephone calls, comparatively few visitors, only one mail a day, and the family ménage is some distance away, easy to walk down to and something of a climb back on a hot day. It would seem as if Douglas were in his castle with the portcullis down and the bridge up.

But Kipling was right. There is no time to do a fraction of what is to be done, of what was planned for the summer days before the spring hegira from the city. There lie piles upon piles of newspapers from cities from Shanghai to Czecho-Slovakia. At best they have only been run through hastily. Here in the corner is an office bag full of reports and pamphlets and many reprints of articles with "compliments of the author" stamped upon them—much valuable material. I have a large writing table upon which some long-gone family served their repasts. What confusion, what disorder! The folder marked "Letters requiring answer" is always full; if it does not grow much fatter, that is because so many unanswered letters are scattered around. And as for books, they and the most important magazines have driven me to one corner of the table, where I have about twenty-four by thirty inches left on which to write. How accusingly those volumes lie there, some with generous dedications by authors, others accompanied by letters from the publishers asking for "just a few words to encourage this very deserving author." "Your Child Faces War"; "Proletarian Journey"; "England Expects Every American to Do His Duty"; "Tramping to Failure"; "These Low Grounds"; the last issue of *Foreign Affairs*. These and many others are mute witnesses to the fallacy that there is time in the country to do everything one should. They bother me, for I am not one of those easily to leave things undone, or to let letters lie unanswered without remorse.

Time seldom hangs so heavily in the country that by three o'clock in the afternoon you can go and lie on the terrace with conscience completely at ease because of 2,500 more words done for the book that nobody will buy—lie on the terrace and watch the clouds drift by and the light change on the shores of the pool while the plover family, that has lately come to visit, parades

about and then stands still ankle deep in the water to catch the unsuspecting bugs. No, a treat like that happens not every day but once in a fortnight. I haven't been in my hemlock grove twice this season, and the cedar field where I laid some young trees low last year has not known my ax this summer. And oh, those hard sweats and lost pounds I was to have rejoiced in! Not once have I even had a sun bath in my privy woods, where one can be as bare as one pleases.

No, it really is all a magnificent conspiracy of nature. She will lure one outdoors and force herself upon one however big the job in hand. Well, let's try once more. Breakfast at eight, outdoors, and then to work early. But one must start the farmer on his tasks for the day and stress the immediate things and say good morning to the horses, the dogs, and the calf, and there certainly is time to make one more attempt to bag that water-snake that haunts the pool. Then on the way up to the workshop there are those plum trees to examine; the fruit must be ready to pick. And how about those early apples on the other side of the road which the farmer always forgets? Nine-fifteen already? Impossible. Well here goes—to pick up the threads of that chapter.

Then in comes the secretary. We pass the time of day—there is some village gossip we must swap. I dictate some letters. Then a rap on the door. "May I show you a rubber doormat made out of old automobile tires; only \$1.85 and it will last forever?" Peace again—no, here comes the mail. One must glance through the letters and deal with the most urgent. And what do the *Herald Tribune* and the *Times* report from Shanghai? Eleven-thirty? Well, let's go to it again. Twelve-fifteen: the farmer knocks. "I am sorry to tell you that the harrow broke; I'll have to go at once to the blacksmith." And then a call from outdoors: "Do come out and see these marvelous clouds; there is a grand thunderstorm coming fast. And don't forget lunch will be ready in fifteen minutes." Next you try to salve your conscience in the afternoon. No hope. Visitors, telephone calls from New York, letters that must go, and one must stop at four o'clock; there's the horse to be ridden—you haven't been on him for three days. After all, one must exercise, and one can work all the evening. Delusion again. One cannot work after dinner until the sunset clouds have been watched, until the last bit of red and gold has faded out. Suddenly panic seizes you—why, it's Tuesday and that confounded *Issues and Men* will be due tomorrow. In you go and have at it. No, the thing to do is to go back to the city. There one *can* work; there there's nothing to do outdoors—there is no outdoors.

BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Escape to the Present Indicative

ESCAPE TO THE PRESENT. By Johannes Steel. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

OF late years there have been a number of fictionalized biographies. Mr. Steel has reversed the process. His "Escape to the Present" reads like fiction in the guise of autobiography. No wonder that in this difficult new genre the author has not yet worked out an effective technique.

The auto-hero is a young German. His father is a high army officer and a close friend of Ballin and Rathenau. His mother is English. His paternal grandfather had kidnapped his wife from a northern Viking isle. Eugenically speaking, the author is conceived in a Hitler dream. He matures in the confused post-war years. He manages to keep his impoverished though noble family going by speculating at the black bourse of a little Rhenish town, and when Dr. Schacht stops the inflation he finds himself with a fortune of 50,000 gold marks. What does he do with it? Of course he becomes a Socialist organizer.

"After some months" he builds up a considerable following among the students at the University of Berlin, and his organization achieves "national importance." He begins reading Marx with the help of Klara, "one of the most remarkable women of post-war Germany." When after six months of mutual Marxism our hero still speaks of their beautiful platonic friendship, Klara brings him to his senses by hitting him over the head with a bottle of wine.

The Social Democratic Party finally rewards the extremely young but successful organizer with a seat in the Prussian Diet. But he is kicked out within twenty-four hours—quite illegally—because he will not stand for the bad manners of the party whip. Whereupon, rather illogically, he becomes a member of the "German Industrial Service," and begins to sell second-hand armaments and to engage in industrial spying all over the world.

At his first post in Warsaw the inevitable beautiful girl spy in the *contre-espionage* prepares a melodramatic trap, from which he finally escapes, revolver in hand. He goes to Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Bagdad. In the desert he is rescued from certain death by a sheik. In the sheik's entourage our hero encounters a French girl, whom the sheik has kidnapped for ulterior purposes. Our hero, of course, rescues the girl—which "proves that once in a while life duplicates the patterns of even the most sensational fiction."

From Bagdad our hero returns to Berlin and there is ordered to read all about Abyssinia, which task enables him to include in his autobiographical romance an article he wrote on Abyssinia some ten years later. Otherwise his study might have been wasted, for he is stopped on his way to Addis Ababa and ordered to Tokyo. There he reorganizes the German spy ring, bribes a Swedish competitor with \$70,000, and is in every way a howling success. But now the small voice of conscience begins to worry the former member of the Prussian Diet. Full of doubts he returns to Berlin. This time he gets himself a cleaner government job and proceeds to South America, where his task is merely to conduct "a pre-

liminary survey for a concentrated program of German economic penetration." This trip takes him to Brazil, Argentine, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, and Cuba. "It took a year and was one of the pleasantest journeys I ever made because there was little to be done."

From Cuba it is only a stone's throw to Washington, D. C., and to New York, where he receives a letter from his father informing him of Hitler's growing strength at home. Whereupon he cables his resignation to the Papen government and takes the next boat home—"ready to do whatever I could to stop the fascist onslaught." At home he tries in vain to activate the Communist Party. "From a friend" he has learned what nobody else knew—the army would not fight the workers. A Communist Reichstag member speeds to Moscow to bring the good news to Stalin. But Joe will not listen and history is forced to take the wrong turn. The subsequent fate of Germany we all know.

One day our hero meets Dr. Schacht—in a post office where "the great man was licking stamps." We are not informed where, when, or how Schacht and Steel become intimates; we are told, however, that the none too social international banker turned to him and said: "Come in tonight around ten o'clock." Our hero is somewhat astonished, for "I had given Schacht to understand on frequent occasions that I considered him a traitor to the democratic cause." But he accepts the invitation. At Schacht's he meets for the first time Dr. Rosenberg, the great Slavic pan-German mythologist, who immediately offers him a post in the foreign division of the National Socialist Party.

In a rather loud voice I asked him what, in view of my political record, gave him the nerve to make such an offer. He answered drily, "This is no matter of convictions, of likes and dislikes. We need men of your type who are well connected abroad. We can guarantee them careers. Many Socialists are coming over to us."

And then Rosenberg adds confidentially: "What do you think I am in this business for? Because I believe in it? Nonsense. Because I have a future with it." At this point Schacht joins the conversation. "Better do as Dr. Rosenberg tells you or you will be out of luck in a few days. If you consider his proposal, you may be undersecretary of state in the foreign office inside of five years."

Naturally this leads to the arrest of our hero and to his solitary confinement in a lonely villa somewhere in Wannsee, exactly where he does not know. He escapes in the brown shirt of his guard, whom he overpowers with an iron poker. He flees to Paris. From there he sends his parents a winning lottery ticket—for Schacht had of course confiscated his bank account.

In the second part of his book the author deals with his hero's refugee years in England and in America. The more nearly he manages to "escape to the present" the less fictional the autobiography sounds, and the less exciting. He gives only a superficial account of his doings. The tragic psychological struggles of the political refugee to adjust himself to American life are not even touched upon.

From a literary point of view Mr. Steel's performance may be dismissed as plain trash. But as a document of a German

political refugee it must be exposed. The very publication of this volume—with the implication that it pictures the career of a prominent anti-Nazi—reflects on thousands of serious and useful refugees who represent the best of German culture. There is only one virtue in Mr. Steel's autobiography. He has finally and completely disposed of his kind of hero.

FRANZ HOLLERING

Corruption's Poet

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOHN WEBSTER. Edited by F. L. Lucas. Oxford University Press. Four Volumes. \$10.50.

THE name of John Webster attached to certain seventeenth-century plays is almost nothing except a name. He is mentioned in some satiric lines by a gentleman of Lincoln's Inn and in complimentary verses prefixed to his plays, but of the various Websters who turn up elsewhere in contemporary documents it is not certain which, if any, is the playwright. Not even the date of his birth or death is known, and this, by the way, should be remembered by those who think our relatively extensive knowledge of Shakespeare significantly scanty. Apparently Webster attracted no great attention as a dramatist in his own day; he was forgotten during the eighteenth century; and it remained for Lamb and Swinburne to elevate him to the position of a major writer. Even now only two of his plays, "The White Devil" and "The Duchess of Malfi," are often read or ever admired, and many refuse to consider even them as more than examples of the extravagant and decadent violence into which Jacobean drama fell. His work as a whole has never been previously edited since scholarship achieved its present knowledge of his age, and it is not likely that these four volumes with their elaborate paraphernalia of notes will soon be replaced.

Mr. Lucas boasts that his research into the allusions and double meanings of Webster's dialogue has disposed forever of the belief that his plays are "pure," for learning can show that the author of "The Duchess of Malfi" was no less fond of indecent innuendo than was the author of "Romeo and Juliet." Of more general interest is the critical introduction in which Mr. Lucas considers the problem most likely to present itself to any reader not willing either to surrender himself to Swinburne's rhapsodies or to join with William Archer in considering Webster as a type of the bad playwright. How can we reconcile the sinister power of the first half of "The Duchess of Malfi" with the steady piling up of horrors until the things becomes grotesque if not actually laughable? To me it has always seemed that the scene in which the Duchess feels her way toward a declaration of love is one of the most powerful and at the same time one of the most restrained in dramatic literature. It is the reverse of flowery; there is no trace left of the Elizabethan joy; but there is an almost overwhelmingly powerful sense of the dramatic contrast between one honest thing and a whole corrupt civilization. The man who wrote that scene must have been a man of fine perceptions and a man whose sense of despair was deeply spiritual. To me, at least, it proves far more than could be proved by a dozen trick lines like the famous exclamation, "Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle: she died young"; and whatever the explanation of the collapse of the play, it cannot be that Webster was a mere journeyman purveyor of what his public wanted.

Mr. Lucas has several partial solutions for the problem. The least satisfactory seems to me his attempt to suggest

that the contrast between Webster at his most moving and Webster at his most mechanical is not so very much greater than that between the most inspired and the most conventional parts of other Elizabethan and Jacobean writers, including Shakespeare. More convincing is his elaboration of a contention which Professor Stoll has made familiar here—namely, that Webster's contemporaries were far less concerned that either we or seventeenth-century audiences in France with consistency of any sort, that they took a play, scene at a time, for the poetry or the fun or the excitement which that scene supplied without very much caring that they were sometimes expected to forget what had gone before. In this connection he quotes a passage dug up by A. B. Walkley from a Frenchman's account of a voyage to England later in the seventeenth century. Speaking of the English play the author says, "They do not mind if it is a potpourri because, so they say, they pay attention to it only one part after the other without bothering about the whole" (my translation).

At least one thing may be said, and that one thing is important if one is to appreciate properly either the Jacobean drama or the literature of many other periods remote from ours. Certain faults in Webster do not imply what similar faults would imply in a contemporary writer. Of a dramatist today we might reasonably say that any man who could write scenes as crudely violent as some of Webster's was obviously a man of blunt sensibilities. It is, indeed, impossible to conceive of a modern who could combine such coarseness with any refinement at all. But certain things are compatible with one another in one age without being compatible in a different one, and the fact is as strikingly true when one considers characters as it is when one considers talents. Elizabethans could do things which no contemporaries of our own could reconcile just as they could write things all of which no man since their day could find room for in one world, much less in one play. Webster, in other words, does not have to stand or fall as any whole we can conceive. He can be a stupendous playwright and a silly one within one play. There is little point in arguing that the last act of "The Duchess of Malfi" must be good if it was written by the man who wrote the scene between the Duchess and her lover. But there is, if possible, even less point in trying to argue that if that last act is as grotesque as it seems to us, then we must be deluding ourselves when we find others almost dazzling.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Belly-Bumps, Bible-Class, etc.

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES. PART II, BAGGAGE-SMASHER-BLOOD. Edited by Sir William Craigie and James R. Hulbert. University of Chicago Press. \$4. Twenty Parts. \$75.

THE second fascicle of the "Dictionary of American English" begins quite fortuitously with the term *baggage-smasher* and stops with *blood*. In between it traverses such empire-making words as *bakery*, *bald*, *balky*, *ballot*, *ballpark*, *Baltimore oriole*, *bamboo*, *banana*, *band-wagon*, *banjo*, *bank-barn*, *barbecue*, *barb wire*, *bargain-counter*, *barkentine*, *Barn-burner*, *barn-owl*, *bar-tender*, *baseball*, *basswood*, *bath-tub*, *bean soup*, *bear-trap*, *beat*, *beaver*, *beef cattle*, *begin*, *belly-bumps*, *Bible-class*, *bison*, *blizzard*, and many hundreds more, including seventeen pages devoted to *black* and its compounds. These are all words of American make, or have been adapted

to new uses in this country, or have had a career of special note in America. About all of them the editors have something, and often a good deal, to say, and they manage to say most of it by the skilful selection and arrangement of thousands of quotations. These quotations, presented not only in numbers but with an expanse of context seldom possible in such works, besides admirably serving their purely lexical purpose, are frequently informing, suggestive, amusing, or otherwise of interest for their own sake, so that the completed dictionary might be read as a huge "Anatomy of America" constructed on genuine Burtonian principles of hundreds of thousands of apt quotations. I doubt, however, whether the editors themselves have ever entertained such an intention, even in the most subsidiary form. Their procedure is rigorously objective; unlike such lexicographers as Wyld and Weekley, they allow themselves no humor, no irony, no personal flavor, but no other dictionary-maker or committee of dictionary-makers has produced a book so continuously readable.

A second glance at my sample list of words in this section will show that the dictionary, or this part of it anyway, is largely a dictionary of nouns, of the names of places, animals, plants, commodities, tools, and activities that were once new or unfamiliar to the experience of Englishmen. Almost as remarkable is the multitude of compound words, novel combinations of old concepts. How far the process has gone may be seen in the word *beaver*. It is an Indo-European word of the greatest antiquity, has always been part of the English vocabulary, and must have come to America with the first explorers and traders. But in the New World it went to work in earnest. In American use it has had two entirely new meanings—a beaver skin, and an amount equivalent to a beaver pelt—and has developed forty-six compounds. Moreover, phrases such as "to work like a beaver" are common and were once natural in American speech, and finally eighteenth-century Americans coined the word *beaveret* to designate the imitation beaver fur used by hatters. Scholars used to be of the opinion that an emigrant language ceased to change and became, in relation to its parent dialect, distinctly archaic. American English does have certain archaic features, but what the "Dictionary of American English" chiefly exhibits are its powers of adaptation and growth.

Admirable as the plan and execution of the dictionary are in general, there are a few details of editorial policy that ought to be reconsidered. The editors have decided to deal only exceptionally with pronunciation and etymology, on the ground that "the great majority of the words included [in the dictionary] are of such a nature that their normal pronunciation is familiar to every educated person, and special comment is required only in rare instances," and that "for a large proportion of the words also the ultimate etymology has only a remote interest." These reasons are not entirely convincing, and one may suspect that the editors are making a virtue of a necessity imposed upon them by time, space, and money. It should be possible, however, to indicate the pronunciation of Spanish, Indian, and other loan words, which are certainly not known to every educated person, even if he happens to be an American and not a foreigner. Etymologies, too, where they are desirable, should be given in full, instead of with the laconic brevity of a desk dictionary. Still more disappointing is the treatment of many explanations and definitions of words. The principle that a dictionary's concern is with words and not with the things that the words represent is unassailable, but words and things cannot be cleanly severed—dictionary and encyclopedia necessarily occupy a space of common ground. Especially in a dictionary that professes to deal fully

with "every word denoting something which has a real connection with the development of the country and the history of its people," one reasonably expects to find short, untechnical descriptions of the things designated by substantives. But unfortunately, in a noticeably large number of instances, one must turn from the "Dictionary of American English" to the "Oxford," the "Shorter Oxford," or one of the American dictionaries for this kind of information. Without encroaching on the province of the encyclopedia, the "Dictionary of American English" could increase its convenience and usefulness by extending slightly the scope of its explanations and definitions.

GEORGE GENZMER

You Read as You Please

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK. By Walter Duranty. Simon and Schuster. \$2.50.

WE ARE all more or less at the mercy of the foreign correspondents, but their novels, at least, we can read as we please. Here is Mr. Duranty, famous as a reporter of the Russian scene, writing a novel about Russia, and the result is something that might just as well have been produced in one of Hollywood's scenario establishments. Except for its sympathy with the revolutionaries, the book is pitifully dependent on the formulas that every moviegoer knows by heart. Ivan, the protagonist of the story, is a poor peasant boy who rushes headlong into a career of changing the world—yet throughout he remains the changeless character of pulp fiction. After a cycle of experiences in Siberia, the World War, the revolution and the civil war, he rises to head a detachment of guerrilla fighters, but all the time, of course, he is consumed with love for an aristocratic lady of White Guard allegiance, who appears miraculously at every turning-point in his life to involve him in a head-on collision of carnal desire with bolshevik duty. But this lady is only his major passion; the truth is that all the girls love Ivan, but Ivan loves the revolution best. This preference, however, by no means prevents the author from indulging in descriptions of amorous encounters of a kind that are out of date even in drugstore thrillers. And the type of prowess manifested by Ivan in his role as sexual and revolutionary superman soon makes us suspect that Ivan Petrovich is merely a pseudonym and that actually our hero is a fearfully inhibited young Englishman who in an exotic environment runs amuck.

The novel contains a good deal of elementary information concerning the Russian Revolution, and the section dealing with the Siberian guerrilla warfare achieves a vigorous reportorial pace. In its portrait of bolshevism, however, it goes in for romantic legends. Ivan's party mentors, for example, are the familiar stencil figures we have come to know so well in conventional Soviet fiction, where they are presented as characters with steel-cable nerves whose rectitude is as automatic as their political wisdom. Moreover, the author seems astonishingly naive in his approach to revolutionary doctrines and revolutionary education. He has his hero, exiled to Siberia at the age of sixteen for striking a policeman during a disturbance in a brothel, pounce on "Das Kapital," read it through, and undergo an instantaneous conversion to communism. It is the first revolutionary work he had ever read, and internal evidence shows the young man to be quite devoid of intellectual interests. This is really a joke on Karl Marx, and to have it happen one must either have a very low opinion of the magnum opus of the labor movement or else consider it altogether beyond human understanding.

PHILIP RAHV

Overcrowded Japan

POPULATION PRESSURE AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN JAPAN. By Ryoichi Ishii. London: P. S. King and Son. 12s. 6d.

SOME publicists use the excuse of population pressure to whitewash everything that Japan has done or may do—on the theory, "Don't scold Johnny for sticking pins in the baby, remember he has a weak heart." Such apologists have tended to alienate rather than to attract the sympathies of the Western world. This is a pity, for the Japanese nation deserves sympathy if ever a nation did—the more so when, struggling to escape from an economic impasse, it blindly follows misguided leaders up a rocky road along which no safety lies.

Dr. Ishii, in gratifying contrast, writes with the modulated accents of the conscientious scholar, and they carry conviction. The first full-length study of Japanese population by a Japanese writer to appear in English, his book makes full use of Japanese sources as well as the techniques developed by Japanese and Western students of population. From his scholarly, sane, and balanced account three points emerge which no student of international social movements can afford to disregard: (1) Japan does have a serious problem of overpopulation; (2) the problem, as his title emphasizes, is closely bound up with the entire trend of Japanese economic life since the Meiji restoration; (3) the solution, such as it is, must be sought first and foremost within Japan itself.

In a country where only 15 per cent of the land is arable and nearly half of the population support themselves by agriculture, Japan's population density is somewhat greater than that of the state of New York. Now about 70,000,000, the population is growing at the rate of nearly a million a year. To be sure, this process is not expected to go on indefinitely. If the death rate is falling, so is the refined birth rate; and the practices of later marriage and birth control, already in evidence, may be expected to gain headway in an increasingly urbanized civilization. For the next twenty or thirty years, however, the outlook is distinctly gloomy. Japan has at present an unusually large proportion of minor children. No possible adjustment of the birth rate can prevent these children from growing up, looking for jobs, marrying, and having offspring. Experts agree, therefore, that by 1960 Japan's population will reach 80,000,000 or 90,000,000, and that for the next twenty-five years or so about half a million persons annually will be added to the working population. Can Japan provide each year half a million new jobs? This, says Dr. Ishii, "is the real test of Japan's social and economic system—a test which the nation cannot attempt to evade." Jobs, not food, are the crux of the problem, Dr. Ishii emphasizes.

Little hope may be placed in the absorption of any more workers in agriculture; indeed, counsels of efficiency would dictate fewer men and more machines. As for emigration. Dr. Ishii wastes little time in criticizing the exclusionist policies of the white nations, not even our own inexcusably tactless exclusion act. Even if emigration were unrestricted, it would offer, in his view, no permanent solution. The way out, if there is one, lies rather in further development of industry and foreign trade. Japan's deficiency in natural resources, he believes, is not necessarily an insurmountable handicap, in view of "modern transportation facilities and the influence that Japan enjoys in East Asia." A graver problem is presented by the fact that industrial development presupposes technological changes permitting larger output with fewer



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workers. Though Japan has at present no large visible army of unemployed, feudal elements in her social structure, such as family solidarity and paternalism, tend to conceal the real situation.

In order to achieve the desired objective of relieving population pressure, Dr. Ishii believes that the development of industry and foreign trade will have to be carefully planned. "Promotion of international cooperation for freedom of trade and for access to certain essential natural resources" must be the keynote of external policy; while, internally, emphasis must be laid upon institutional reforms, including land reform and labor legislation. Dr. Ishii's book would have been more valuable if he had devoted more space to his constructive suggestions. But his work will have been amply justified if it serves only to document the single thesis: "In a country such as Japan, where the natural resources are limited and the population density is high, special attention must be accorded to the creation of a well-balanced and more or less equitable distribution of the national wealth."

MIRIAM S. FARLEY

A Wreath for Lawrence

T. E. LAWRENCE. By His Friends. Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$4.

THIS latest book on T. E. Lawrence is a collection of reminiscences compiled by his brother in a volume of 538 pages. Of the previous accounts of Lawrence none are revealing enough of the man. Yet because Lawrence remained to the end an enigma, unpredictable even to his friends, the accounts of him rarely fall into trite and conventional eulogy. Liddell Hart is chiefly concerned with the military tactics involved in the "Revolt." Charles Edmonds's "T. E. Lawrence" is a recital in adventure. Robert Graves contributes an intelligent biography, but again refuses to probe into Lawrence's personality beyond a certain point. The present volume fills, or almost fills, a lack in Lawrence literature. I say "almost" because, although Lawrence had a great number of friends, each saw only that side of him which he chose to reveal. There is probably no one living who knew him well enough to reveal him in the round.

It was Lawrence's expressed intention to exclude his more intimate feelings from "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," in the hope that it would thereby gain stature as a work of art. Yet the type of hero which he represents is the very type whose personal feelings matter very considerably; and once his story, largely through the efforts of Lowell Thomas, was made available to the public an interest in his personality was inevitable. In all he did he revealed himself intensely an individual—not, as most successful generals and governors, merely a man doing his commissioned best in the service of a system.

The present work, naturally enough, resolves into a hunt for personal motives, an attempt on the part of numerous people to explain the "mystery" of Lawrence from the inside. As such, it is unusual both for the articulateness of most of the contributors and their wide variety as individuals; but even so many hands do not make a finished picture. The effect is that of a puzzle in which, at the end, many pieces are left over. In a world which seems to be given over to the sweeping categories of the psychologist, the politician, or the scientist, Lawrence still remains, it would seem, inviolable.

WILLIAM GILMORE

FILMS

The Novelist as Hero

IT IS a question whether any artist can be the hero of a first-rate narrative. For his characteristic activity is not in itself dramatic, or even visible. He gives substance to everything except himself, and in proportion as he does this well he remains an unknowable person dwelling somewhere back in the mistlands of creation. His labors are performed entirely in his head; or if his hand is engaged, the spectacle of its movements is to any outsider either dull or incomprehensible. There might be a certain excitement in watching Tolstoy scratch off the last sentence of "War and Peace," but the really heroic drudgery of writing such a book eight times would, merely as spectacle, be intolerable and meaningless; and any attempt to dramatize Tolstoy's mind as he conceived and executed the work would inevitably give us something inferior to the work itself. Stories about artists must be content to deal with externals—gestures which do not express the whole man.

"The Life of Emile Zola" (Warner Brothers) is no exception, in spite of the fact that Zola's career had its picturesque aspects and in spite of the interest which attaches to the Dreyfus case. But to make a story out of the career it has been necessary to assign gestures to Zola (Paul Muni) that are either false or irrelevant—grimaces at the writing desk, pauses while the ceiling is scanned for inspiration, self-conscious preachments to his friends about the truthfulness of his vision—and in general to diminish the man's force by taming it to a purpose. Mr. Muni's Zola is so far from the sprawling genius of the books as to be of all things a fussy and somewhat schoolmasterly reformer. The result is not uninteresting; indeed it is often rather fine, and Mr. Muni has done with clear skill what he has done. The unphotographable truth, however, was more impressive.

The Dreyfus case is naturally the climax of the film, and Joseph Schildkraut's acting as the unfortunate captain has a great deal to do with the success of its second half. So has the acting, and the casting, of the other parties to the case; the intrigues of the generals and the travesty of the trial are terribly convincing. But another circumstance has weakened this portion of the film. Rightly or wrongly the direction has seen fit to suppress the anti-Semitic theme; one would scarcely know that Dreyfus had been a Jew, and one certainly never learns that the case, at least until Hitler, was the high-water mark in European history of agitation over the race. The Dreyfus of the film is merely an individual victim of injustice, and Zola's contribution is to a discussion much narrower than that which actually raged during a decade of near-revolution in France. So that once again the film dwindles its material—saving enough of it, nevertheless, to provide in Dreyfus's humiliation and reinstatement the two most moving moments of the whole, and indeed two moments that rise above most such things on the screen.

For that matter "The Life of Emile Zola" is, considering the many good things in it, a worthy film. But it is not among the best, and in the nature of things it could not be. Zola's characteristic deeds were his books, and a series of books is not a story; or if it is, it has already been told and can only lose by paraphrase.

MARK VAN DOREN

RECORDS

MOZART'S Violin Sonatas K 378 and 454 (Victor: five records, \$10) are, for me, matters of great interest and pleasure, both of which are diminished by Heifetz's playing. And to know what it is that I dislike in the musical style of Heifetz's playing, you need only listen to Emanuel Bay, who plays the piano with him: listen to the continuous, though sensitive, line that Bay draws with a melody, then to the way Heifetz breaks it up with little swells. The melody issues from the piano with all its distinction and elegance; from the violin it issues affected, sentimentalized, vulgarized.

On the other hand, Brahms's Piano Quartet Opus 26 (Victor: four records, \$8) is a work that interests and pleases me very little: I am aware of craft and cerebration even in passages that are beautiful and moving ("So many preparations and circumlocutions," Tchaikovsky complained, "for something which ought to come and charm us at once"). But the spontaneity, vitality, and fire that are not in the music are in the marvelous performance of Rudolf Serkin and members of the Adolf Busch String Quartet. Serkin's playing is particularly fine, and Busch's tone has a warmth that it has often lacked. Recording is excellent.

The spontaneity, vitality, and fire that are absent from Brahms's quartet are also present, with marvelous richness of substance, in Dvorak's Slavonic Dances. Victor issued a first series a year ago, and has issued a second now (five ten-inch records, \$5.50). They are superbly performed by the

Czech Philharmonic under Talich, and excellently recorded; and the combination of music and performance makes this, for me, the outstanding set of Victor's July list.

Most of Musicraft's antiquarian research I have not found very rewarding; but the Sonata for violin and figured bass of Purcell, on a single record (\$1.50), has two slow movements which I find extraordinarily beautiful. Nor are they by any means exceptional: there is more where this sonata came from; and Musicraft can do no better than to let us have it. Mr. Trenkel's violin throbs a bit too much; aside from that the performance, with figured bass played by Ernst Victor Wolff (harpischord) and S. Hunkins ('cello), is excellent. Another Musicraft release is a delightful String Quartet of Dittersdorf, excellently performed by the Perole String Quartet (two records, \$3).

Among the Brunswick-Polydor chamber-music releases is Verdi's String Quartet, which has some lovely and charming pages. The Prisca Quartet plays the first three movements well enough, but fails to achieve the lightness and spirit that should be in the last movement. Recording is good (four ten-inch records, \$4.50). The same group's performance of Beethoven's Quartet Opus 59 No. 2 is vastly inferior to that of the Budapest Quartet on Victor; there is therefore no reason to endure the frequent breaks involved in the six ten-inch records (\$6).

On Columbia singles (each \$1.50) are a performance of the little Boccherini 'Cello Sonata No. 6 by Maurice Maréchal, and a performance of some of Tchaikovsky's charming music for the ballet "The Sleeping Beauty" (used by the Monte Carlo Ballet in "Aurora's Wedding") by the Paris Symphony under Szyfer—both good, and both well recorded.

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Letters to the Editors

Protest and Correction

Dear Sirs: In your issue of August 14 Mr. Benjamin Stolberg, in his article entitled *Vigilantism, 1937*, offers a list of groups which he elects to class as vigilante or fascist organizations. His inclusion among these fascist groups of the Ohio League for Constitutional Rights evidences a gross disregard of facts or a crude indifference to them.

Two and a half years ago this league was conceived by a small group of courageous liberals who felt grave concern for those very trends in anti-democratic opinion which Mr. Stolberg is writing about. The leader was the late Walter J. Shepard, then dean of the Arts College at the Ohio State University, president of the American Political Science Association, nationally recognized as author and educator, and one of the truest exponents of militant liberalism in the country. Ultimately the chairmanship was taken by a distinguished leader of the Ohio bar, former Supreme Court Justice Robert N. Wilkin of New Philadelphia, a man whose devotion to democratic idealism and whose abhorrence of fascist-mindedness is recognized and respected all over the state.

In the short period of its existence the Ohio League for Constitutional Rights has, among other activities, twice investigated unlawful arrests by Columbus police—each time of alleged Communists—and been instrumental in procuring the reversal of a teachers'-tenure case, and the reversal of two arbitrary rulings by the Division of Censorship on banned motion pictures—"The Amateur Fire Brigade" and "A Greater Promise." It investigated the so-called "sitdown strike" in the Governor's office by members of the Workers' Alliance and, after interviewing personally several of the strikers, concluded and publicly stated that the protesters were lawfully ejected, and that while there were instances of excessive violence, the force used was on the whole not abusive. It publicly protested against the unlawful exclusion of a C. I. O. organizer from the city of Lancaster this June and has made an analysis of the violations of civil rights at Massillon as revealed by testimony in a case now pending.

Contrary to Mr. Stolberg's irresponsible inferences the league is an organ-

ization which is the very antithesis of vigilantism. Can it be that fascist-baiters, even as red-baiters, have lost the capacity or the will to recognize an aggressive liberalism that is neither left nor right?

ROBERT E. MATTHEWS, Secretary
Columbus, Ohio, August 21

Dear Sirs: Mr. Jack Day, field secretary of the Ohio League for Constitutional Rights, came to see me to object to my mention of his organization in the same breath with various vigilante groups in my *Nation* article. I have also received several letters from other officers of the league.

Mr. Day was easily able to show that I had been mistaken. We were also able to trace just how the mistake had been made. And now it gives me real pleasure to apologize in making this correction. Far from being a vigilante outfit, the league is an authentic civil-liberties organization, intent on doing exactly what it professes, although unfortunately both its professions and its deeds have at times been so extremely cautious and ultra-conservative as to annoy some of its more progressive friends in Ohio.

BENJAMIN STOLBERG
New York, August 25

Are Writers Dumb?

Dear Sirs: I wish to disagree heartily with every opinion expressed in the review of "Little Children" published in *The Nation* of August 21. I have no doubt the author of the review knows what he's talking about, and a lot more besides which he isn't bandying around at the present time; but for my part I can't make head or tail of it. Every bit of it reads like something that means something, and if I didn't know better and if it wasn't about a book I've written, I'd say the reviewer had something there.

For several years now, as a hobby and as a means of not losing my mind, I have been trying to understand my writing by comparing what I know about it with what intelligent critics know about it, and I don't seem to be getting anywhere. If the critics can understand what I have written well enough to be able to write so wisely of it, why can't I understand what they

write about what I've written, which they understand so well? Don't they know how to write, or what? Or are writers just naturally dumb and people who oughtn't to write? Or is writing unnecessary, except writing about writing? Or should critics write the stuff itself, which so far writers, through some miscalculation somewhere, have written? Or what? Like Sherwood Anderson, I want to know. Please print this letter and let's all engage in an old-fashioned controversy and may the best side win. WILLIAM SAROYAN
New York, August 19

Broun Was Right

Dear Sirs: Mr. Broun wrote in *The Nation* of July 10: "If . . . anybody can imagine the Scripps-Howard chain being wrong, then . . . when that legendary day comes, Memphis, Tennessee, will be out of luck. Only one version will be served to it." I wonder if he knew how very pertinent his remarks were.

When the court fight began, the professionally liberal *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, in which Mr. Broun's column had long appeared regularly, held its editorial peace while its columnists (Clapper, Johnson, and Broun) wrote glowingly of the President's attempt to unpack the court. But when the *Press-Scimitar* felt that public opinion was drifting definitely away from Roosevelt, and when Clapper and Johnson turned to pleading with the President to abandon his plan, the paper, in front-page editorials, began to scream as loudly as Mr. McCormick. And Mr. Broun's column ceased to appear regularly. Indeed, it has not appeared in the *Press-Scimitar* more than a dozen times in the past three months—and on these occasions it was on everything but politics. Mr. Broun need wait no longer for his legendary day. His wise and righteous employers have already proved his point.

DALE MULLEN
Oxford, Miss., August 15

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